

Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery (FoHPC)

Minutes of Annual General Meeting at St James' Hall, 25 January 2010

<u>Item</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<u>Welcome and Introduction</u> Chairman Richard Bell (RB) chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees, including members of the Friends of Wombwell Cemetery. Twenty-five members and eight visitors attended. As at least 15% of membership was present, the meeting was deemed to be quorate.	
2	<u>Apologies</u> None.	
3	<u>Minutes of AGM held on 26 January 2009</u> As the previous AGM minutes were available on the FoHPC website, and members were given the opportunity to read them when they were notified of the meeting, the minutes were not read out. As no one had any questions about the previous minutes, they were accepted by the meeting.	
4	<u>Executive Committee Report for 2009</u> RB read out the report (see separate document). Photos of the newly installed information signs were shown.	
5	<u>Finance Report for 2008/2009</u> Rev. Alan Murray (AM) presented the accounts for the year up to April 2009. The opening balance was £419.30, and the closing balance was £419.30. Since then, the amount in the general fund has reduced to £158. AM said that the newsletter is probably the main expense, and asked those members present to let the committee know if they have an email address, so the newsletter can be sent electronically rather than by post. Members were also asked to let the committee know of any changes to their email addresses. The Friends received a 'Grassroots' grant of £2,783, which the Friends are in the process of spending. RB said that the organisation may need to think of realigning the AGM date with the financial year, to synchronise the two.	

6 Presentation by the Friends of Wombwell Cemetery

Wombwell Chair Mike Bretton gave a talk about the formation and achievements of the Friends of Wombwell Cemetery. The talk was illustrated by a slide show by RB.

7 Looking Forward to 2010

RB set out the potential projects, subject to prioritisation by the new committee:

- 1) Refurbishment of Section O (CHASE will be starting work on this soon)
- 2) CHASE to heavy prune shrubs (March/April)
- 3) Plant out wildflower seedlings
- 4) Install signs around wildflower meadow
- 5) Obtain plan of plots and offer photo service (eg, to people out of the area, via the website)
- 6) New/additional guided walks – eg, mayors, war graves, street names, etc.
- 7) Additional 'self guided walk' leaflets
- 8) Regular 'working meetings' for the Friends
- 9) Set up supervisory arrangements with HMP Moorland, then
 - a) paint gates and railings
 - b) trial repairs to headstones
- 10) Continue pressing for path re-surfacing
- 11) Project involving 'Living Streets' (formerly the 'Pedestrians Association')
- 12) And other ideas!

RB asked for other ideas from those in attendance.

Question: Is there a mortuary at the cemetery? RB said that there are two chapels and a Lodge, all needing a lot of work to be useable. There is nothing similar in size to the mortuary at Wombwell which the Friends there use.

Question: How do the two cemeteries compare in size? RB said that Hyde Park is about twice the size of Wombwell.

Question: What about installing gates to New Street entrance? RB said there this could be done, but there are many places where someone could still go over a low wall.

Question: Could the prisoners build up a wall? RB said that if the entrance was secure, someone would have to open and close the gates.

8 Election of Executive Committee

The following Executive Committee nominations were received for 2010:

- Chair – Richard Bell
- Vice-Chair – Val Winfield
- Treasurer –Rev. Alan Murray
- Secretary – no nominations received

- Committee – Margaret Bark
- Committee – Jay Singh Dillon
- Committee – Wendy Sissons
- Committee – Rosemary Slater
- Committee – Josie Whitehead

This leaves one vacancy on the committee.

As there was no need for a secret ballot, RB asked for a show of hands from members to approve and appoint those nominated.

As there were none against, the motion was taken to be unanimous, and all the above committee members were duly elected.

9 Appointment of Auditor for 2010

Michael Fenton, the Friends' current auditor, has indicated he is happy to carry on.

Those members present voted unanimously to approve this appointment.

10 Any Other Business

RB highlighted the upcoming Doncaster Heritage Festival (15 – 26 February 2010), a programme of events by the Local Studies Library.

RB gave a flavour of what the festival will cover, including RB giving a talk about the Sand House.

RB also noted that there were membership forms and flyers about the Friends available.

RB also gave his contact details (richardbell.fohpc@btinternet.com), the website address (www.fohpc.org.uk), and his mobile number (07777 688438).

He also thanked the guests from the Friends of Wombwell Cemetery, and those who attended.

11 Close

The meeting closed at approximately 8:45 pm.

END

Notes prepared by Sheila North
February 2009



Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery

Executive Committee Report for 2009

The year began with several new members joining the committee and the election of a new Chair and Secretary. The AGM also gave its support to the committee's proposal to focus initially on several small projects aimed mainly at bringing some physical improvements to the appearance and facilities of Hyde Park Cemetery, rather than to continue chasing the increasingly unrealistic prospect of a complete renovation of the whole site, costing several £million. These decisions marked a new beginning for the Friends.

Two key steps were necessary to be able to progress the projects that formed the 2009 action plan. The first of these was to obtain funding and the second was to have a means of implementing the actual work, i.e. a delivery route.

With assistance from Groundwork Dearne Valley, a funding proposal was prepared covering several of the items in the action plan and, in late June, a bid was submitted to Doncaster Central Development Trust for a Grassroots Grant. Following some delays due to answering supplementary questions raised by DCDT, and a late summer break in their meetings schedule, it was not until mid-October that the Friends received the good news that all except one element of our bid had been successful and we could begin to move forward with greater certainty.

A potential delivery route for physical works in the cemetery, in the form of offenders serving community sentences and being managed by Carr House Allotment Social Enterprise (CHASE), was identified as far back as late 2008. However, the Friends' lack of funding until much later, combined with the need for CHASE to obtain certain formal approvals before being permitted to work on DMBC property, meant that they were unable to plan any work in Hyde Park Cemetery until the very end of the year. However, the Committee is pleased to be able to report that CHASE should be commencing work on refurbishing Section O in February.

Some of the action plan items which did not rely on the Friends having a delivery route such as CHASE were progressed from early in the year. One key element was the complete overhaul and re-launch of the Friends website, which was placed back online in early June and has, since then, not only been updated with news and events, but also given further enhancements. The website has received favourable comments from several people and has been a source of a number of enquiries about the cemetery. The addition of some tracking software in early December has enabled us to analyse the usage of the website since then, revealing amongst other things that it has received hits from as far afield as the United States, Canada and Australia.

Another item which could be progressed once funding had been obtained was the provision of three new information signs within the cemetery, on the subjects of Cemetery History, Notable Doncastrians and Natural History. The content of the signs was finalised at the end of December, the order placed with a local supplier, and the signs installed this very morning.



In a similar vein, the project to create a wildflower area in part of the cemetery has started, with pupils from Hexthorpe Primary School planting up seed trays which they are caring for in the school's greenhouse over winter, prior to planting out in the springtime.

In August, the Friends organised a litter-pick in the cemetery, assisted by the DMBC Neighbourhood team. This proved to be both effective and enjoyable and was a way for members to make a tangible contribution towards the improvement of the cemetery.

In October, Doncaster's elected mayor, Peter Davies, accepted an invitation from the Friends to make a joint visit to Hyde Park Cemetery, which he did along with Cllr Cynthia Ransome, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods. The discussions were wide-ranging and both Mayor Davies and Cllr Ransome expressed fulsome support for the Friends. One of the main objectives that the Richard Bell and Alan Murray sought to achieve from the meeting was an undertaking from the mayor to have the main paths of the cemetery re-surfaced. Following the meeting, Mayor Davies instructed his Cabinet Member for Drainage, Transport & Roads to look at the possibility of improving the paths. Estimates have now been prepared and the Friends will be pushing for the necessary work to be carried out during 2010.

Establishing and maintaining good working relationships with related organisations is vital to the future success of the Friends. Our relationships with DMBC Bereavement Services and CHASE have been strengthened through the year and thanks go to Amanda Carr and Pete Beresford, respectively, for their major contributions and ongoing support. Also, a meeting with Adrian Welch, proprietor of the glazing business adjacent to the cemetery's main entrance, in early November, laid the foundations for what we hope will be a mutually beneficial relationship in the coming years. Another meeting in November, this time with the Outwork Coordinator from HMP Moorland, opened up the possibility of work parties from the open prison undertaking improvements in the cemetery, and this is a matter to be followed up during 2010.

The profile of the Friends has been maintained not only through the upgrade of our website but also through exhibiting at both the Tenants' and Residents' Day in March and the Local History Fair in September. At the latter, in particular, a great deal of interest was shown in the Friends stand, with several new members being recruited.

In summary, 2009 has been a year of significant progress for the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery. Nevertheless, it is absolutely clear that the achievement of our objectives is much more a marathon than a sprint, and the executive committee looks forward to the continuing support of the membership in making the improvements to the cemetery that we all wish to see.

25 January 2010

END